

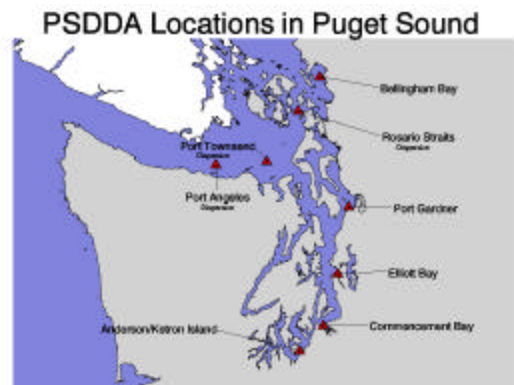
Dredged Materials Management Program

Dredging is a critical activity that affects the lives of nearly every Washington State citizen and visitor. A significant component of Washington State's economy depends upon navigation and maritime commerce, which in turn depend upon dredging material from our state's waterways. Dredging is also an essential element of many environmental cleanup efforts around the state, and is necessary to support numerous recreational activities. While the need for dredging activities is clear, disposal of the resulting dredged material – which sometimes contains toxic chemicals, pesticides, and metals – creates a challenge for state and federal environmental managers.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is part of an interagency program that oversees the disposal and beneficial use of sediments dredged from the waters of Washington State. The Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) consists of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Seattle District), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 10), the Washington Department of Ecology and the DNR. The program exists to facilitate navigation and maritime commerce, while guaranteeing protection of Washington's aquatic environment. Each agency brings to the table its unique management responsibilities and specialized knowledge and expertise.

By statutory requirement, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) “provides, manages, and monitors aquatic land disposal sites on state-owned aquatic lands for materials dredged from rivers, harbors, and shipping lanes.”¹ Through its DMMP office, DNR is responsible for management and environmental monitoring of twelve in-water dredged material disposal sites. They can be found in or near:

- Anderson and Ketron Islands
- Bellingham Bay
- Commencement Bay
- Elliott Bay
- Port Angeles
- Port Gardner
- Port Townsend
- Rosario Strait.
- Grays Harbor (2 sites)
- Willapa Bay (2 sites)



¹ RCW 79.90.550

DNR manages its disposal sites through a Site Use Authorization (SUA). The dredging proponent must provide confirmation that they have all required permits, prior to obtaining a SUA from DNR. Once DNR issues the SUA, the dredging proponent may commence disposal subject to conditions described in the permits and SUA. The dredging proponent pays a per cubic yard fee authorized under RCW² and set under WAC³, to use the disposal sites. All funds generated from these fees are deposited into the Dredge Material Management Account. Funds from the Account “may be spent only for the management and environmental monitoring of aquatic land dredged material disposal sites.”⁴ Under RCW, the DNR’s DMMP is required to be a self-sustaining program funded by revenue generated from disposal site use.

DNR, in consultation with the other DMMP agencies, is responsible for conducting regularly scheduled environmental monitoring events at its open water disposal sites to verify that DMMP management guidelines are adequately protecting the environment against unacceptable adverse impacts. These monitoring events confirm whether deposited materials remain within the disposal site boundaries, the cleanliness of the materials disposed at the site, and the effect of dredged materials on local aquatic life.

Since the program’s inception, annual volumes of dredged material disposal range from 120,000 cubic yards to well over 1.5 million cubic yards. By establishing and implementing sediment sampling, chemical and biological testing, and test interpretation, the interagency DMMP evaluates the suitability of dredged material before it can be approved for in-water disposal. The DMMP member agencies developed and adopted these evaluation standards, which they review and update as better science and information becomes available.

² RCW 79.90.560

³ WAC 332.30.166

⁴ RCW 79.90.555